



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC TAKES ACTION TO PROMOTE FLEXIBILITY AND REDUCE COSTS FOR WIRELESS BACKHAUL

Washington, D.C. -- Today, the Federal Communications Commission proposed, as recommended in the National Broadband Plan, to remove regulatory barriers to the use of microwave spectrum for wireless backhaul. By enabling more flexible, cost-effective, and high-capacity microwave services, the Commission can help increase deployment of fourth-generation (4G) mobile broadband networks across America.

Microwave communications has become, in a growing number of situations, a viable option for backhaul of mobile broadband traffic. Backhaul costs currently constitute a significant portion of a mobile wireless operator's network operating expense, and the demand for backhaul capacity is increasing. As broadband providers accelerate deployment of next-generation networks, they will require backhaul that can carry what is expected to be significant growth in mobile data traffic.

Today's *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (NPRM) explores ways to increase the flexibility, capacity and cost-effectiveness of the microwave bands below 13 gigahertz, while protecting incumbent licensees in these bands. In particular, the notice seeks to update regulatory classifications that may not have kept pace with the evolution of converged digital technologies, and to provide for increased spectrum sharing. The proposed rule changes may be particularly beneficial to rural areas, where microwave may be the only practical, high-capacity backhaul solution available to serve certain remote locations. With spectrum sharing, 750 megahertz of microwave spectrum may be made available for broadband backhaul or other advanced point-to-point uses.

The *Notice of Inquiry* (NOI) requests comment on further steps the Commission can take to reduce wireless backhaul costs and increase investment in broadband deployment. It asks about changes in technical rules that would enable longer links in rural areas. The NOI also inquires as to whether permitting use of smaller antennas could similarly reduce costs and stimulate investment. Finally, the NOI seeks comment on whether the Commission should examine any additional modifications to its rules or policies to promote the flexible, efficient and cost-effective provision of wireless backhaul service.

Action by the Commission August 5, 2010, by Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Notice of Inquiry (FCC 10-146). Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn, and Baker. Separate statements issued by Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners Copps, McDowell, and Clyburn.

Docket No. 10-153

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